



Paths to QUALITY™ Levels

Overview

Paths to QUALITY™ (PTQ) is Indiana's voluntary quality rating and improvement system overseen by the FSSA. It serves as an assessment and quality improvement tool for providers and helps inform families of child care providers. There are four levels on the PTQ system and range from meeting basic health and safety standards to achieving national accreditation. Licensed centers, homes, and registered ministries are all eligible to participate.

Level 1: Health and Safety

Programs have demonstrated that they are operating in good standing and are recognized by the State as having met all required health and safety standards.

- Develop and implement basic health and safety policies and procedures.
- Basic requirements for health and safety are met. Some requirements include:
 - Program has a child care license, registration, or certification
 - All staff are trained in first aid and at least 1 staff member is trained in CPR
 - All children are directly supervised at all times
 - Staff to child ratio is maintained and at least 2 adults are present at all times
 - Food and nutrition requirements meet minimum standards
 - A written emergency plan that is communicated to families and staff
 - Age grouping policies are maintained
 - All equipment and materials are safe and free of sharp edges
 - Outdoor equipment meets CPSC guidelines
 - 1 toilet and 1 lavatory is maintained for each 15 children
 - At least 35 square feet of useable indoor space is provided per child
 - Adequate lighting is maintained
 - Temperature is maintained at 68 degrees or more

Level 2: Learning Environments

Programs have demonstrated a commitment to improve program quality. They offer opportunities for children to advance their growth and development. They have evidence of a consistent daily schedule, planned activities, and provide program information for families.

- All requirements of Level 1 are met
- An advisory board is in place to provide input and support to the director
- Provide an environment that is welcoming, nurturing, and safe for the physical, emotional, and social well-being of all children
- Provide a variety of learning materials that reflect the age, interests, and abilities of each child
- Provide for children's language and literacy skill development
- Program has a written philosophy and goals for children
- Program has a communication system to reach families daily and annually in conferences

Level 3: Planned Curriculum

Programs have demonstrated the knowledge and skill necessary for planning appropriate activities and opportunities that lead to school readiness. Programs have made significant investments in the professional development of the staff and incorporate family and staff input into the program.

- All requirements for Level 1 and 2 are met

Every child in every neighborhood deserves access to an education that enables them to define their own life path.



- Program has been in operation for at least 1 year
- A written curriculum and planned program for children reflects developmentally appropriate practice
- Program evaluation is completed annually by parents and staff.
- Actively engage in program evaluation and have an action plan for improvement
- Demonstrate professional growth of Director and staff or lead caregiver and assistants in excess of licensing requirements
- Facilitate family and staff input into the program.

Level 4: National Accreditation

Programs have demonstrated commitment to the highest level of professionalism in quality child care by achieving national accreditation. Programs are managed by a provider or director who has volunteered to provide mentoring to others.

- Approved accrediting bodies include:
 - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
 - National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
 - Council on Accreditation (COA)
 - National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
 - Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)
- Professional develop and involvement continues and includes mentoring other providers

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